

Quarterly evaluation report

Y4Q1: October-December 2014



open briefing
the civil society intelligence agency

Highlights

- Open Briefing combined work on remote-control warfare over the past year can now be said to have made a significant intervention in the debates surrounding special operations forces; private military and security companies; unmanned vehicles and autonomous weapons systems; cyber warfare; and intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance.
- During this quarter, Open Briefing published a book on Russian airborne forces; briefings on trends in remote-control warfare and the stalled transition in Burma; articles on the Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty, the succession of Iran's supreme leader, the transition of power in Burkina Faso, and the failure of Turkey's Kurdish policy; four weekly briefings and one of our new monthly political and security risk updates; a remote-control warfare monthly briefing; and the first of our new monthly series on transnational organised crime.
- Open Briefing secured grants totalling £12,470 from the Remote Control project, Marmot Charitable Trust and Philamonic Trust.
- Progress was made on seven out of 10 objectives in the last quarter, and overall we are on target with five of our objectives, two of which we have reached already.

Table 1. Summary of progress achieved to date against each stage 2 objective.

Objective	% of target achieved	Progress over last quarter	On target?
Respond to 100 intelligence requirements from civil society organisations	25%	-	X
Make six significant interventions in key peace and security debates	50%	▲	X
Attain 3,000 subscribers in total	90%	▲	✓
Attract 4,000 unique visitors a month to the Open Briefing website	47%	▼	X
Receive 12 media mentions	108%	▲	✓
Achieve an average online influence score of 60/100	86%	▲	✓
Publish 90 Open Briefing publications	112%	▲	✓
Expand the team to 35 members in total	63%	▼	X
Raise £190,000	49%	▲	X
Generate 8% of income from sources other than trusts and foundations	93%	▲	✓

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1. Respond to **100** intelligence requirements from civil society organisations

Open Briefing has so far responded to **25** intelligence requests from civil society organisations during stage 2 (25% of target). There has been no change in this since last quarter.

With hindsight, the target of responding to 100 intelligence requests was far too ambitious, as it would require us to respond to nearly three a month over the three years of stage 2, which is completely unrealistic given the time and resources needed to respond to each request appropriately. As it is, we have so far responded to nearly one a month, which is excellent given our all-volunteer team and all the other work we have completed.

2. Make **six** significant interventions in key peace and security debates

Open Briefing has so far made **three** significant interventions in a key security debate during stage 2 (50% of target).

Our combined work on remote-control warfare over the past year can now be said to have made a significant intervention in the debates surrounding special operations forces; private military and security companies; unmanned vehicles and autonomous weapons systems; cyber warfare; and intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance. In particular, our analysis of trends in remote-control warfare for the Remote Control project's report *New Ways of War: Is Remote Control Warfare Effective?* was very well received, and highlighted significant developments in the way war is being imagined and implemented.

3. Attain **3,000** subscribers in total

Open Briefing had a total of **2,692** subscribers to its e-bulletin, social networks, podcast and other outputs at the end of this quarter (90% of target). This is up from 2,553 subscribers at the end of the previous quarter. Our e-bulletin still has the most subscribers (1,333), followed by Twitter (550).

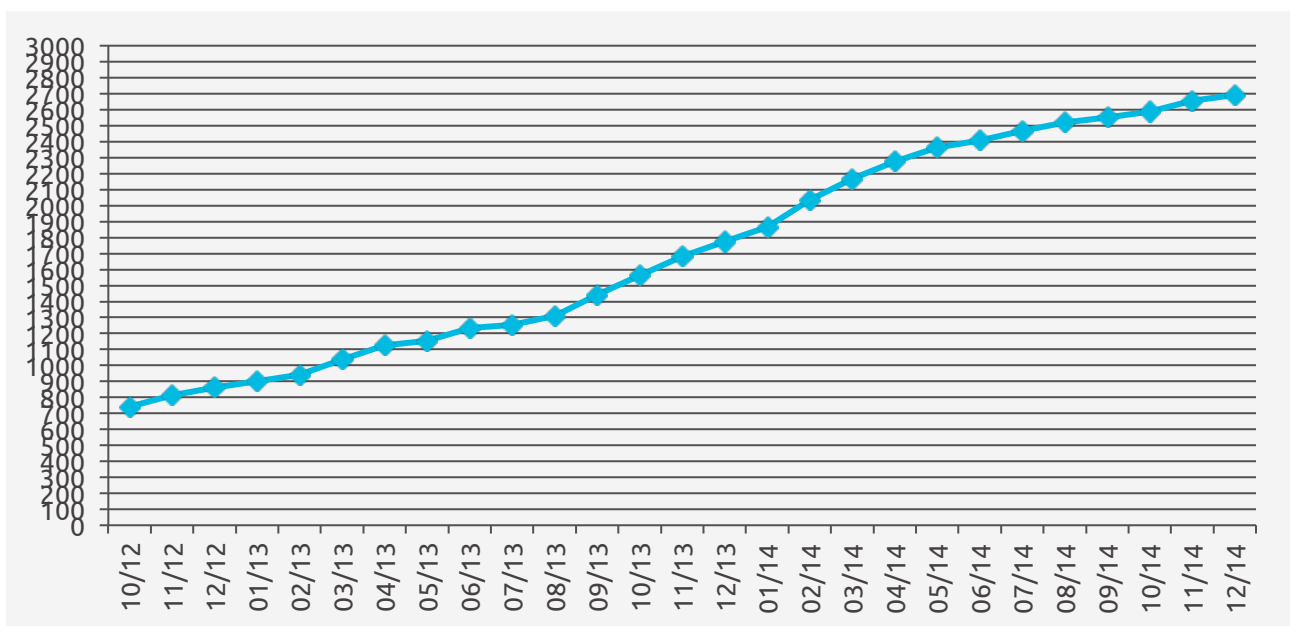


Figure 1. Number of subscribers to the Open Briefing e-bulletin, social networks, podcast and other outputs.

4. Attract **4,000** unique visitors a month to the Open Briefing website

There were an average 1,741 unique monthly visitors to the Open Briefing website during this quarter; up from an average 1,578 visitors during the previous quarter. The average unique monthly visitors over stage 2 so far is **1,886** (47% of target).

It is still unclear whether this decline is due to our material not being presented in an accessible enough way on our website, the design of the website itself (either form or function) is putting visitors off, or some other reason. As soon as funds allow, a complete redesign of the website and the way we present our material will be undertaken.

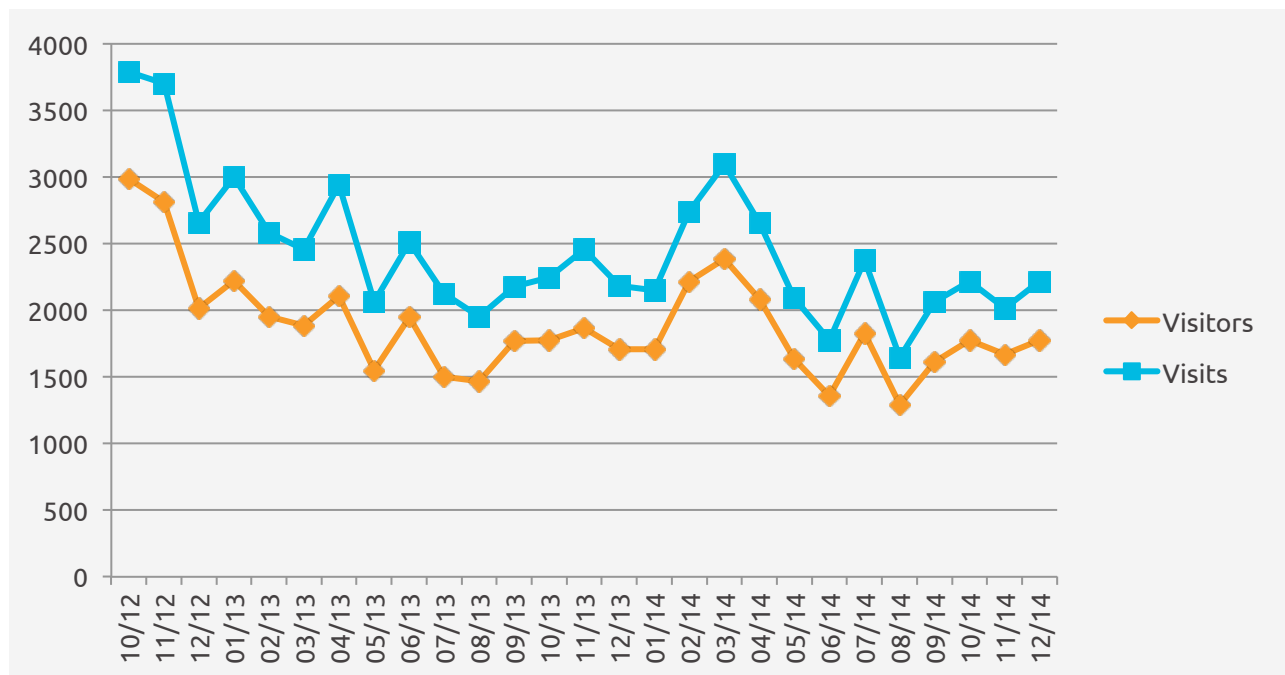


Figure 2. Number of unique visitors and visits to the Open Briefing website.

5. Receive **12** media mentions

Open Briefing's work received one media mentions in this quarter. We have so far received **13** mentions during stage 2, meaning we have already surpassed our target (108% of target).

Following the publication of the Remote Control project's report *New Ways of War: Is Remote Control Warfare Effective?*, one of our researchers was interviewed about private military and security companies on Reality Check on FM4 (Austrian radio) on 24 October 2014.

6. Achieve an average online influence score of **60/100**

Open Briefing uses a basket of online metrics to measure social media influence and relative website importance. Using these, our average online influence score across this quarter was 51.8/100, including a Google PageRank of 5/10. This was up from 50.7/100 during the previous quarter. Our current online influence score is **51.5/100** (86% of target).

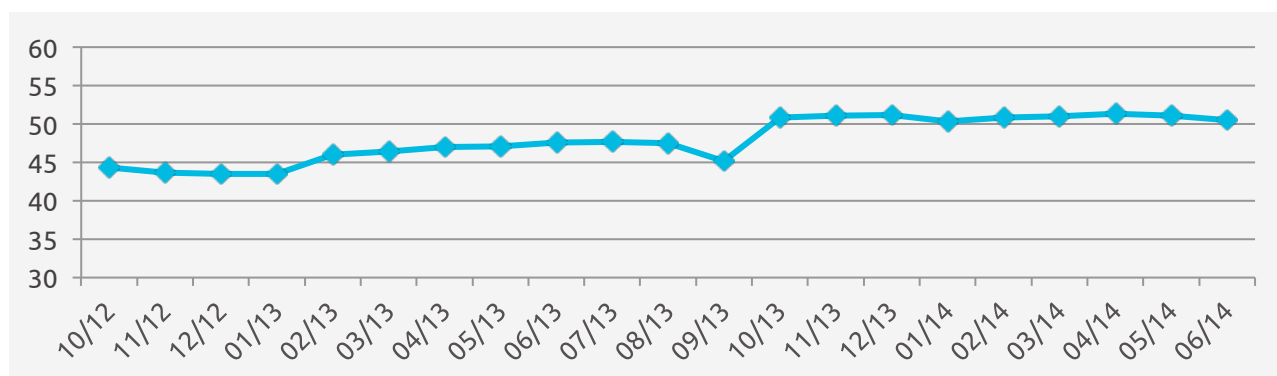


Figure 3. Open Briefing's average online influence score.

7. Publish **90** Open Briefing publications

During this quarter, Open Briefing published a book on Russian airborne forces; briefings on trends in remote-control warfare and the stalled transition in Burma; articles on the Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty, the succession of Iran's supreme leader, the transition of power in Burkina Faso, and the failure of Turkey's Kurdish policy; four weekly briefings and one of our new monthly political and security risk updates; a remote-control warfare monthly briefing; and the first of our new monthly series on transnational organised crime.

These 14 publications mean we have now published **101** publications in total during stage 2, already surpassing our target (112% of target).

8. Expand the team to **35** members in total

There are currently **22** members of the Open Briefing team, including staff, volunteers and advisers (63% of target).

Two associates left the organisation this quarter, and we recruited another analyst, Dr Mary Young.

9. Raise **£190,000**

We have so far raised **£93,910** towards our 2012-15 budget (49% of target). This includes three grants secured this quarter: £5,970 from the Remote Control project, £5,000 from the Marmot Charitable Trust and £1,500 from the Philamonic Trust.

10. Generate **8%** of income from sources other than trusts and foundations

7.4% of our income over stage 2 has so far come from non-grant sources (93% of target).

Chris Abbott, founder and executive director

22 January 2015